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CHESS AND WAR.

TRULY, Napoleon III. finds employment for his subjects in France as well as in the Crimea, thought I, when lately threading my way amongst piles of building materials, and the wreck of dismantled houses, in search of favourite haunt of bygone days in the fair city of Paris. My search was in vain. The Café de la Régence, that for more than a century had been the head-quarters of Parisian literature and chess-playing, had fallen before the modern march of improvement, and I could not discover even the spot upon which this world-renowned resort had so long stood. The Régence was established about 1718, during the regency of the Duke d'Orleans, from which circumstance it derived its name. It immediately became, and till nearly the close of the eighteenth century continued to be, the principal rendezvous of the leading French literati of the period. The profligate Duc de Richelieu, Marshal Saxe, the two Rousseaus—Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Jacques—Voltaire, D'Alembert, Holbach, Diderot, Marmontel, Grimm, are but a few of the celebrated names that frequented its large, low-roofed, dingy, sand-bestrewn *salon*. Grimm tells us that a guard used to mount daily at the Régence, to prevent the mob from breaking the windows, so eager were they to see Jean-Jacques Rousseau attired in his fur-cap and flowing Armenian robe. Benjamin Franklin, too, when in Paris, was a constant visitor to the Régence, and there, in all probability, acquired the first idea of his entertaining *Morals of Chess*; for towards the end of the last century, the Régence gradually became more of a chess than a purely literary resort.

To the *littérateurs* of the *petit-maitre* school succeeded the stern men of the Revolution. Robespierre, who, in spite of the change of fashion, still wore hair-powder and ruffles, played chess in the Régence with the close-cropt, shabby-looking Fouché. Another player of that period was the young sous-lieutenant of artillery, who subsequently astonished the world as the Emperor Napoleon. About this time, too, arose—the Régence being their fostering *alma mater*—the great school of chess-players, which has made France so celebrated for the game. Legalle, Philidor, Boncourt, Deschapelles, Mouret, La Bourdonnais, St Amant, with a host of other less renowned celebrities, bring the series down to almost the present day—all now, save St Amant, numbered with the dead—the very hall, that has so often resounded with their victories, levelled to the ground.

As may well be supposed, the Régence, when it had a local habitation and a name, was rich in traditional

lore. The tables where Voltaire and Rousseau used to sit, were, to a late period, known by their names. I have drunk coffee at Jean-Jacques, and played chess on Voltaire. The most cherished legend, however, was, that Robespierre, who was passionately fond of chess, granted the life of a young royalist to a lady, the lover of the proscribed, who, dressed in male attire, came to the Régence and defeated the sanguinary dictator at his favourite game. We would gladly believe this redeeming trait in the character of one who has so much to answer for, but the story sounds too like a myth. You might mollify the heart of the most tigerly disposed of the human race with a good dinner and a bottle or two of *Clos de Vougeot*, but you cannot disturb the equanimity of the mildest-mannered man, or annoy his *amour propre* in a greater degree, than by giving him check-mate. Still, as the relater of the legend said, 'let us hope it is true.'

The French novelists have laid many of their scenes in the Régence, and the compilers or manufacturers of facetiae have found it a fertile soil. Of the latter, there is one that even our own learned Josephus Millerius, of witty memory, would not have been sorry to record. It relates how a certain man frequented the Régence, six or seven hours daily, for more than ten years. He never spoke to any one; and when asked to play, invariably refused, but manifested great interest in the games played by others. One day, at length, a very intricate and disputed question arose between two players. The bystanders were appealed to; but the opinions on each side were equal. The taciturn man was then called in as umpire. He hesitated, stammered, and, when pressed, acknowledged, to the extreme astonishment of all, that he knew nothing whatever of the game, not even the initiatory moves. 'Why, then,' exclaimed one, 'do you waste so many precious years watching a game you can take no possible interest in?' 'I am a married man,' was the quiet reply, 'and I find myself more comfortable here than at home with my wife.'

Deschapelles was probably the best, and certainly the most remarkable, chess-player that ever entered the salon of the Café de la Régence. He was naturally endowed with an exclusively peculiar talent for rapidly acquiring a complete mastership over the most intricate games of skill. At trick-track, a very difficult and complicated game, somewhat resembling backgammon, he was unrivalled. Polish draughts, a highly scientific game, little inferior to chess, he mastered in three months, beating the very best players of the day, though seven or eight years is generally considered a fair period for a person of ordinary abilities to become a second or third rate player. More extraordinary

still: he always asserted that he acquired all he ever knew of chess in four days! 'I learned the moves,' he used to say; 'played with Bernard [a celebrated player]; lost the first, second, and third day, but beat him on the fourth; since which time I have neither advanced nor receded. Chess to me has been, and is, a single idea. I look neither to the right nor to the left; but I simply examine the position before me, as I would that of two hostile armies, and I do that which I think best to be done.' Still more extraordinary is the manner in which this preternatural faculty was developed. In his first youth, Deschapelles was considered to be a person of rather inferior abilities. Joining, however, the army of the republic, he was one of a small body of French infantry which was charged by a brigade of Prussian cavalry: in the mêlée, his right hand was shorn off; a sabre-cut clove his skull, and another gashed his face diagonally from brow to chin. This was not all. The whole Prussian brigade galloped twice over his mangled body; once in the onslaught, and again in their retreat. Deschapelles was subsequently picked up, and carried off the field, his head presenting a ghastly mass of fractures. To the surprise of everybody, he ultimately recovered; and to his death, which occurred but a few years since, he ever attributed his unparalleled endowments, as regards games of skill, to the *bouleversement* his brain received on that awful occasion!

Great men, in their varied walks of life, are generally modest; Deschapelles, however, was an exception to the rule. Yet his assumption, if not warranted, was at least supported by his merits; it was a sort of military frankness, rather than gasconade. He was as proud, and talked as much of his success in growing prize-melons in the Faubourg du Temple, as he was of his chess-victories in the Palais Royal. In short, it seems that in everything he turned his mind to he was successful; and so much were the Parisians impressed with the idea of his universal abilities, that the Gauls—one of the secret societies of 1832—had seriously proposed, in the event of a forcible change of government, to create M. Deschapelles dictator of France.

Mouret, chess-teacher to the family of Louis-Philippe, was one of the most amusing of the later frequenters of the Régence. It was he who, shut up in a drawer barely sufficient to contain a good-sized cat, for many years conducted the moves of the celebrated, but improperly termed, automaton chess-player, in almost all the principal towns of Europe. Many were the amusing anecdotes he used to relate, when subsequently revealing the secrets of his prison-house. Though the slightest noise, the least audible intimation of a living creature being concealed in the chest—apparently filled with wheels and other mechanism, upon which the automaton played—would have been fatal to the deception, Mouret never lost his presence of mind, save upon one occasion. It happened thus: The automaton was exhibiting in the capital of one of the minor German principalities, and, as usual, drawing crowded audiences. A professor of legerdemain—everybody is a professor now-a-days—who was performing in the same place, finding his occupation gone through the superior attractions of the wooden chess-player, determined to discover and expose the secret. Aided by his long professional experience of the deceptive art, he soon saw through the trick, which more learned

persons had only distantly guessed at; and, assisted by an accomplice, raised a sudden outcry of fire just as the automaton was in the midst of an interesting game. The noise of the alarmed spectators rushing from the room, struck a momentary panic to the heart of Mouret, who, believing himself about to be burned alive, struggled so violently to release himself from his concealed bondage, that he rolled the automaton, turban, cushion, and all, over on the floor. Maezel, the visible exhibitor, instantly flying to the rescue, dropped the curtain; but next day the automaton left the town, and the astute conjuror remained master of the field.

In justice to chess, it must be added of poor Mouret, the most amusing of story-tellers, that he was the only first-class chess-player I have ever met with who extinguished fine abilities, sacrificed character, and destroyed life, by over-indulgence in strong waters.

But I have wandered too long among the traditions of the Régence. Fatigued and disappointed by my fruitless search after the building itself, I made my way round to the Place du Palais Royal, and seating myself in a peculiarly comfortable arm-chair, commenced an agreeable flirtation with a glass of lemonade. There, while musing on the chess-paladins of the past, I was startled by an appearance which, at first glance, I took to be a spectre, but immediately after recognised as one of the last living relics of the olden time. It was the tall, thin, black-stockinged, frock-coated, buttoned-up, linenless-looking, grisly old Pole, with the unpronounceable name, who for many years has been so well known to the *habitues* of the Régence. I never met with any one who could spell and pronounce his most cacophonous of names; but that did not matter, as he had long held the titular rank of colonel; while the youngsters of the Régence—behind his back, though, be it said—gave him the sobriquet of Leipscie, from his interminable, and not always very well-relished, accounts of that famous battle.

He was doing the *flaneur* business in grand style, when, like the Ancient Mariner, I held him with my eye, and, to keep up the nautical allusion, soon brought him to anchor in the chair beside me. Our first greetings being over, we lamented the decadence of chess and the fall of the Régence; then spoke of other matters of general and peculiar interest. As I suspected that the great question of the day, to him at least, related to dinner, I at once, by a quiet invitation, set his mind at rest on that important subject, and then inquired where the Parisian chess-players now mustered.

'Some of them,' he replied, 'are *aristos* shut up in clubs—a vile system, excuse me, though borrowed from your own country. A few still worship Caïssa, the divine goddess of chess, in a *café*; come,' he continued, 'let me introduce you to her modern temple.'

I found the temple of Caïssa, as my companion rather magniloquently denominated it, to be, in spite of plate-glass, gilding, and marble-topped tables, little better than a third-rate *café*; and saw, as soon as I entered, that the fane of the goddess was desecrated by draughts and dominoes—the games of boors and children. The Pole invited me to play, but I declined; for not relishing either the air of the place or the tone of its company, I had at once made up my mind to remain but a few minutes. We had discussed a *demi tasse* each, and were about to depart, when a young soldier

entered the salon—a Zouave, who had been wounded at the Alma. I am an Englishman, and, of course having a thorough contempt for enthusiasm, detest scenes and all such sort of things; still, I could not refrain from fraternising with the brave fellow, from shaking the remaining hand of one who had lost the other fighting beside my own countrymen. Then the filling and emptying of glasses, the universal rite and symbol of fraternity, had to be duly celebrated. Did we not *trinquer* together! Did I not, in honour of the occasion, drink a whole *petit verre* of that, to me at least, horribly offensive compound—offensive to the olfactory as well as the gustatory nerves—*crème d'absinthe*!

The entrance of the soldier, like the breaking of a potent spell, unloosed a score of tongues. Draught, domino, and chess-players, threw up their games, to converse on the all-absorbing topic of the war. With no little amount of vociferation and gesticulation, the movements of the Allied armies were freely criticised, and approval or censure loudly proclaimed by the wordy disputants. I need scarcely observe, that there are matters connected with the war humiliating and painful to English ears—with true French politeness, these subjects were not brought forward in my presence. But as the hot debate was rapidly leading towards that unpleasant direction, the wily old Pole created a diversion by exclaiming: 'After all, gentlemen, war is but chess, and chess is war.'

'What!' shouted the Zouave, with that indescribable emphasis which a Parisian *gamin* gives to the simple pronoun *quoit*.

'I repeat,' replied the colonel, 'that the principles of chess and war are the same, and in chess will be found a complete epitome of the art of war. For instance, no one can play at chess without first acquiring a perfect knowledge of the various moves which distinguish the different pieces, neither can a general command an army who is ignorant of the simple evolutions of a *peloton*. How can a man handle a number of regiments, who cannot manoeuvre a single battalion?'

'True, true,' chorussed a number of voices. It evidently appeared that the Pole had mounted his hobby; and the audience, forgetting their previous debate, had unanimously determined that he should ride it for their amusement.

'When opening the game,' continued the colonel, 'we direct our moves so that no one of our pieces or pawns can neutralise the effect of another; while, at the same time, we place them where they cannot be attacked with impunity, and in the most advantageous positions for assaulting the enemy. A skilful general will act on a similar principle. He will select the ground most favourable for the action of his infantry and cavalry, taking care that they do not restrain the fire of his artillery; and, by the same rule, he will use all the means in his power to prevent the enemy from deploying his forces in so advantageous a manner. At chess, this can be done only by having the first move. There are first moves also in war. The general who first takes the field acts on the offensive, his opponent being compelled to act according to the manner in which he is attacked. And, as in chess, it is no very great disadvantage to be forced to act on the defensive; for, in the course of a campaign, the attacking army will be almost sure to make some mistake, which, if promptly taken advantage of by its opponents, will change the defence to an attack. In war, as in chess, it is much more difficult to attack than to defend. The great secret of success in chess is foresight, not only to direct your own moves towards a definite object, but also to penetrate the intentions of your adversary. It is the same in war. Your enemy makes a certain movement; it is for you to divine his motives for doing so. This is absolutely indispensable, if you wish to be in a position to parry successfully his attacks. A small disadvantage in chess, a crowded situation, an

unsupported piece, a neglected opportunity of castling, and other apparent trifles, frequently leads to the loss of the game. So it is in war: the fate of arms depends upon a number of minute particulars and combinations. We should be astonished if we knew the very small links in the chain of circumstances which have lost great battles, and neutralised the effects of glorious campaigns. But I am tiring you, my children, with the garrulous gossip of an old soldier and chess-player.'

'No, no!' was vociferated from all parts of the room.

'Proceed, if you please; we are all attention.'

'Well, I will say a few words more. I need not tell you that, when a projected attack at chess is foiled by the superior defences of your adversary, it should be immediately abandoned, and your men placed in another position of attack, or on the defensive. In war, an obstinate persistence in attack has been fatal to the fame of many great generals: they lost their men, and with them the means of forming another attack, on a less formidable position, and even the power of making a vigorous defence. A great general is never obstinate. Napoleon I., particularly in his Italian campaigns, was the beau-ideal of chess-player. The art of war, as exemplified by that great general, wholly consisted in the proper application of three combinations: first, the disposition of his lines of operation in the most advantageous manner, either for attack or defence; secondly, the skilful concentration of his forces, with the greatest possible activity, on the weakest or most important point of the enemy's lines; thirdly, the simultaneous employment of this accumulated force upon the position against which it was directed. This is exactly the correct system of attack at chess. The principles of defensive operations in war and chess are precisely similar. It is an acknowledged principle, that the basis of a plan of attack should form the best possible line of defence. This fundamental rule can never be violated with impunity; for nothing is more embarrassing than a sudden transition from offensive to defensive operations—when false moves, or an unfortunate oversight, has deranged the plan of an assault. There likewise is considerable analogy between the abilities required to form a great general and a skilful chess-player. The commander of an army should possess a complete knowledge of the general principles of war, which may be required during a tedious campaign, or demanded by the exigencies of actual conflict. He must plan, arrange, and conduct preliminary operations; act with promptness and decision in cases of emergency; judge of the importance of a position, or the strength of an intrenchment; discover, from the slightest indications, the designs of the enemy, while he shrouds his own in impenetrable obscurity; and, at the same time, preside with unshaken self-possession over the shifting fortunes of the tumultuous battle-field. A skilful chess-player requires qualities of a similar description. To a perfect mastery of the difficult art of selecting and occupying, with the utmost rapidity, a commanding position, he must add a thorough knowledge of all the many and complicated varieties of stratagems and snares, which he is alternately called upon to invent and put into practice—to see through and defeat.'

'All great generals have been chess-players; and it is a curious fact, that the traditions of both the East and the West relate that chess was invented during a siege. The Hindoo legend states, that it was invented by the wife of Ravan, king of Ceylon, in order to amuse him with an image of war, while his metropolis was besieged by Ramah, in the second age of the world. The Western tradition, however, is more feasible. According to it, the game was invented by Palamedes, to amuse the Grecian warriors during the ten tedious years of the siege of Troy. Simon, it is said, was one of the most celebrated of the Greek players, and derived

the idea of the wooden horse, with which he finally check-mated the Trojans, from the knight of the chess-board.'

This awful climax recalled me to myself. I had begun to fancy myself in the Régence, when, startled by the appearance of that wooden horse, I looked round and saw that I was in a vulgar café without traditions and without celebrities.

Catching the old soldier's eye, I made a significant gesture, implying that I was going to dinner, and walked out. I had gone but a few paces ere he rejoined me; and I was soon happy to find that neither his appetite, nor his immense fund of anecdote, was at all affected by his lecture on *Chess and War*.

THE 'SWALLOWS' OF THE MOLE.

A 'BRAGGING SPANIARD,' to use the words of the ancient Pistol, when boasting of the wealth and wonders of his country, said that it contained a bridge, several miles in length, on which numerous flocks and herds might freely pasture. However correct the boaster supposed himself to have been, modern geographers, flatly contradicting him, assert that the river Guadiana, to which he alluded, does not flow underground at all, and, consequently, his alleged natural bridge was merely a popular myth in Spanish topography. Yet, it may be observed, that the singularly romantic aspects of nature in the region where the Guadiana takes its rise, had, so early as the period of the Roman conquests in Spain, been connected in the imaginations of the people with many wild and wonderful superstitions. The more modern legend is, that the renowned paladin Montesinos, having been insulted at the court of France, retired into Spain, and took up his habitation in the deep cavern which still bears his name. In the recesses of this cave there is a considerable quantity of water, which probably gave rise to the idea of its being the origin or a part of the Guadiana, thus named after the faithful and valiant squire of Montesinos. But, in reality, the outlet of the lakes of Ruydera—a chain of small lakes, so named after the waiting-maid of the fair and unfortunate Belerma*—is the true source of the Guadiana. The flatness of the country where that river first flows, feeble and narrow; the sandy absorbent nature of the soil; and the luxuriant growth of the surrounding marsh-plants, no doubt established the popular but erroneous belief that the Guadiana was, in some places at least, a subterranean stream. The inimitable Cervantes, by moulding and blending to his own purpose the romantic in nature with the marvels of superstition, has thus produced the delightful episode of Don Quixote's descent into the cavern of Montesinos, justly esteemed by all critics to be the most exquisite of his inventions.

In England, however, we have a river more closely approaching to the nature of an underground stream; indeed, at a certain part of its course, and in certain seasons of the year, it really merits the appellation. Quaint old Izaak Walton speaks of 'a river in Surrey—it is called the Mole—that after it has run several miles, being opposed by hills, finds or makes itself a way underground, and breaks out again far off.' Though unknown to romance or satire, the singular character of this river has caused it to be commemorated in immortal verse by Spenser, Drayton, Milton, Pope, Thomson, and a host of minor celebrities. Spenser, in the *Faery Queen*, thus describes it, when

* Oh, ill-fated Montesinos! Oh, unhappy Belerma! Oh, deplorable Guadiana! and you the distressed daughters of Ruydera, whose flowing waters show what streams of tears once trickled from your lovely eyes.—*Don Quixote*.

enumerating the guests at the bridal-feast of the Thames and Medway—

And Mole, that like a noulng mole doth make
His way still underground, till Thames he overtake.

Drayton, in his *Polyolbion*, with most amusing quaintness and elaborate far-fetched fancy, represents a mutual passion as existing between the Mole and the Thames. But the course of true love, as well as of rivers, never runs smooth. Old Holmesdale, the mother of the Mole, as fabled by the poet, is decidedly against the match; so, to prevent 'the meeting of the waters,' she, in the first place, gives her daughter a good scolding—

But Mole respects her words as vain and idle dreams,
Compared with that high joy to be beloved by Thames,
And headlong holds her course, his company to win;
But Holmesdale raised hills to keep the straggler in;
That, of her daughter's stay, she need no more to doubt,
Yet never was there help, but love could find it out.
Mole digs herself a path, by working day and night,
According to her name, to shew her nature right;
And underneath the earth, for three miles' space doth
creep,

Till gotten out of sight, quite from her mother's keep,
Her foreintended course, the wanton nymph doth run,
As longing to embrace old Tame and Isis' son.

Milton characterises it as—

The sullen Mole that runneth underground.

Pope, in his *Windsor Forest*, uses the very same epithet:

The sullen Mole that hides his diving flood.

In Thomson's *Seasons*, Drayton's 'soft and gentle Mole' is mellifluously amplified into

The soft windings of the silent Mole.

The peculiar phenomena which distinguish this river, varying with the seasons, have caused the most vague, inaccurate, and contradictory descriptions to be given of it. Camden, in his *Britannia*, says: 'The Mole, coming to Box-hill, hides itself, or is rather swallowed up, at the foot of the hill there; and for that reason the place is called a Swallow; but almost two miles below, it bubbles up and rises again.' From this it might be conceived that the river had no open channel between Box-hill and the place of its reappearance, which is not the fact. The Mole has a distinct channel in every part of its course, though its bed for a considerable distance is left dry during the summer months by the operations of not one alone, but numerous swallows. Yet Defoe, the most circumstantial of writers, and one whom we would suppose to have been the most accurate of observers, erroneously states that the river never disappears, even in the driest summers. In short, such is the varying aspect of this river, especially during the summer months, that no two persons who may have visited it without being acquainted with its peculiar nature, can be found to give the same account of it. Let it be our task, then, to explain these conflicting testimonies, and ascribe the true character of this remarkable stream.

The general features of the scenery on the banks of the Mole may be well described in the lines of Wordsworth:

Among steep hills and woods imbosomed flowed
A copious stream with boldly winding course;
Here traceable, there hidden; there again
To sight restored and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and everywhere, appeared
Fair dwellings, single or in social knots,
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hillsides.

Rising in the forest of St Leonard, in the northern part of Sussex, the Mole flows into Surrey, and, about Betchworth Park, becoming of a good size, first assumes the exceedingly picturesque character which distinguishes a part of its course. Nothing can be more beautiful than the scenery on its banks, as, amidst embowering shades, it glides past the ivy-covered ruins of Betchworth Castle. There—as described by a local poetess—

The lingering waters of the brimming stream
Sweep slowly round the wooded bank: so soft
The gentle current, that it scarcely rocks
The floating water-lily.

It continues its course among bold hilly scenery, high woodland banks, and rich quiet meadows, till it passes Stoke d'Abernon. From thence it flows, at a sluggish pace, through a dull, uninteresting, flat country, till it falls into the Thames at Hampton Court, directly opposite the well-known palace of the proud cardinal.

Happily, it is in the most picturesque part of this river's course that these remarkable phenomena, the swallows, occur. Within an easy railway distance from London is the celebrated Box-hill, well known for its rare plants and delightful views, and as a favourite resort for metropolitan botanising, picnic, and pleasure parties. Thousands of persons visit this hill every summer, yet scarcely one of them dreams of the great natural curiosity lying almost at their feet; for it is where the river winds its tortuous course round the base of Box-hill, between Castle Mill and a place called the Shingles, that the first of the swallows may be met with; but these being the highest up the river, are seldom seen in action, as they are generally overflowed by a deep and swift current. Still, their existence may easily be recognised by a watchful eye, from the eccentric motions of any light substances that may be floating on the surface. A short distance lower down the stream, however, there is a channel in the thickly-wooded bank about fifty feet in length, leading from the river to an oval pool or swallow, down which the water pours with great rapidity. Owing to the overhanging woods, this spot is not readily found by a stranger; but if he bear in mind that there is a remarkably fine walnut-tree growing close to the place, and that the opening of the channel is flanked by an alder on one side, and an oak on the other, he will experience little difficulty in discovering it. Not far from this there is another swallow about the size of a large barrel, where may be distinctly heard the hollow, rumbling, yet not unusual sound of the water, in its transit far down in the interior of the earth.

Passing Cowslip Farm—well named, for in spring the meadows are covered with a rich carpet of yellow cowslips, here called *paigles*—we may see, in our downward course along the banks of the river, many other smaller swallows. But the most remarkable place of all, is within a hundred yards of the wooden bridge and public pathway in Fridley Meadows. There, in a cleft of the high eastern bank, forming a most picturesque little glen, overarched with elm, ash, and other foliage, are two large pools containing several swallows, which may always be seen in action by descending to the brink of the stream. A channel, about 20 feet in length, conveys the water from the river to the outer pool, which is about 40 feet long and 20 broad; and from thence a second channel, about 25 feet long, leads the water to the inner pool, which is about 36 feet long and 18 broad. Within and around the area of these pools are numerous crevices, of various sizes, down which the water rushes as through the holes of a colander. It is only, however, when the river is above a certa'n height, that the swallows of the inner pool can be seen in action. At such periods, the supply of water being greater than the swallows of the outer pool can at once carry off, the water in it rises and

flows, by the second channel, into the inner pool, from whence it immediately sinks below the ground. On a recent occasion, when the swallows of both pools were in full action, an attempt was made to form an approximate estimate of the quantity of water they carried off per hour. For this purpose, the depths and breadths of the channels were measured, and the velocities of their currents ascertained by a floating cork and a stop-watch. The result of the calculation was, that the outer pool disposed of 259,200 gallons of water in one hour; and the inner pool, of 82,800 gallons in the same period of time.

The Mole, which at Castle Mill, above the first swallow, was really a respectable river, is now considerably diminished, but still flows onwards. Proceeding downwards, along its banks, numerous small swallows may be observed under the overhanging foliage of Norbury Park, where, in several places, the banks have been undermined and trees uprooted by their ingurgitating process. In this park there is a remarkable group of yews, containing the largest and most ancient specimens of those trees that can be found in England—probably in the world. They are mentioned in *Domesday-book*, may have been in existence when the tread of Roman legions was heard in the land, and are now known by the appellation of the Druid's Grove. Every October, this grove is the scene of rites, conducted at night by the lantern dimly burning, which are regarded with no small surprise and alarm by the neighbouring rustics. The visitors to Norbury Park, however, on such occasions, are not Druids, but enthusiastic entomologists. One of the rarest of English insects, and, from its frequenting the tops of trees, the most difficult to capture, is the dotted chestnut-moth (*Glea rubiginea*). The possession of a specimen of this insect constitutes the veritable blue ribbon of British entomology. Its locality is unknown; but in October, when the berries on the yew-trees of the Druid's Grove are ripe, the night-wandering insect comes to feed upon them, and frequently, intoxicated by their powerful juice, falls to the ground, becoming an easy spoil to the watchful entomologist.

From the Park, the diminished Mole takes an easterly course towards Mickleham, forming a sluggish reach of water, about half a mile in length. Here there is a large swallow, but its operation is slow, as, from the lessened speed and volume of the stream, it is generally choked with brushwood and other loose drift. It occasions, however, the curious effect of the river appearing to flow back towards its source—the stream gently returning upon itself by the suction of the swallow. In early summer, when the waters are rapidly falling, poachers frequently clear the brushwood from the mouth of this swallow to let the water run off at once, in order that they may catch the fish left in the shallows above. Below this place, the river, now scarcely deserving the appellation of a burn, contracts into a narrower and deeper channel, which, before it reaches Mickleham, falls into the insatiable maw of another swallow, and the last drop disappears in the bowels of the earth.

It should be observed that the water is not absorbed by the swallows as by a filter or a spongy soil—it actually pours down into them. Sometimes, however, when the mouth of the swallow is choked by brushwood, leaves, sand, and other drift, brought within its vortex by the force of the descending current, a seeming absorption takes place; but when the obstructing matter is removed, the water rushes down in a continuous stream. Fish are not unfrequently entangled among the other obstructing matters which choke the entrance of a swallow—large pike was thus caught a few years ago close by the meadow at Cowslip Cottage.

We have here described the state of the Mole exactly as we witnessed it on our last visit to its pleasant banks. When we visited it on a previous

occasion, during a very dry season, and the stream of the river was much less copious, we found that the last drop of water was engulfed at the base of Box-hill, a mile and a half higher up. The reader, then, will readily understand how it is that in winter, when the water is high, the *open* channel of the Mole becomes a continuous stream—the ingurgitating action of the swallows ceasing, because the subterranean *passages* are overcharged. But in summer, when the river is low, the water is gradually drained off, until it disappears altogether; and the point of disappearance happens at different places, higher or lower, according as the stream is less or more copious. In continued dry weather, during summer, when the stream is less than the amount of water drawn off by the swallows, every day almost makes a change as regards the extreme point of total disappearance. These facts account for the conflicting descriptions given of this river, as scarcely any two persons who have visited it at different periods have seen it in the same state. And even those who agree with respect to its actual underground course, set different limits to its subterranean career, according as they observed the point of disappearance. The dry upper channel has consequently been stated to extend different distances—from one to three miles. When, as we have already said, we saw the river disappear at the base of Box-hill, the dry channel, measured by its devious windings, extended for three miles, which may, in all cases, be considered the maximum distance.

After the point of disappearance is passed, we, of course, find the bed of the river dry, with pools here and there; but as we proceed further down, and pass Mickleham, we find the channel completely void of water, and overgrown with a rank luxuriant herbage. Proceeding still further downwards, at a place called Bocket Farm, we meet with a strong spring of water, the first re-appearance of the river. As the swallows are numerous, stretching for a considerable distance, so are the springs. Extending for about three-quarters of a mile, this multitudinous chain of springs quickly form a considerable stream; and augmented by more still lower down, the Mole careers along in its destined course, beneath the broad blue skies, a larger river than when it first met with the greedy swallows. Though there is no certain data by which we can determine whether the submerged waters of the swallows be those which form the numerous springs, yet we may fairly conjecture that they are identically the same. This reasonable conclusion is aided by the fact, that when Mr Stephenson was conducting his survey for the Brighton line of railway, he ascertained that the level of the first spring was eight feet below that of the point of disappearance at the last active swallow.

These remarkable phenomena of the Mole are clearly referrible to the cavernous nature of the subsoil over which the river flows. The vale of Box-hill, like other transverse outlets of the chalk of the North Downs, has evidently resulted from an extensive fissure produced in the strata when they were in the act of elevation from beneath the waters of the ocean by which they were once covered. A chasm of this description must have been partially filled with loose blocks of chalk, the interstices being more or less filled by clay, marl, sand, and other drift brought down by the floods which traversed this gorge on their way to the valley of the Thames. The scattered blocks of chalk rest on a stratum of impervious clay, and the constant percolation of water from the surface-soil above washing away the interstitial sand, produces subterraneous water-courses. The swallows are the gullies which lead to the fissures and channels in the chalk beneath. When the water in the river is plentiful, these hollows are filled up faster than the water can be discharged, and the swallows disappear;

but when the river is low, the subterraneous channels drain off the water, and for a certain distance the bed of the stream is left completely dry.

In connection with this subject, and arising from similar causes, we may briefly allude to the remarkable outbursts of water, termed winter-bourns, which frequently occur in the chalk-districts. Rain at all times freely finds its way through the caverns of the chalk, and gives origin to springs which issue forth at the top of the galt or impermeable clay that underlies the chalk; but sometimes, when long-continued rains have filled the fissures and caverns, the spring or vent below is insufficient for the over-supply, and the reservoir, as it were, overflows, the water exuding from the gullies of the upper surface. These occasional sources continue to flow till the perennial springs suffice to carry off the water supplied from the skies. In several places, such springs break out after the autumnal and winter rains, and run themselves dry in the course of a few months. Sometimes many years elapse between the occurrence of these outbursts, till a particularly wet season fills the chalky reservoirs, and causes the stream to flow. This event is traditionally connected with a superstitious dread of coming evils; from the earliest period, it has been supposed to foretell famine and pestilence. Few popular superstitions are so well founded, for the very cause of the flowing of the bourn—an excess of rain—is injurious to the health of man as well as his hopes of the harvest. The outburst of the bourn at Croydon in 1852, after being dry for fifteen years, was accompanied by a pestilential fever so fatal as to attract the attention of the government.

LA RABBIA TÀ.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

THE sun had not yet risen, and a heavy mist hung over Mount Vesuvius, spreading on towards Naples, and enveloping the small towns on the coast. The sea was calm. On the beach of a small gulf under the Sorrentine rocks several fishermen were engaged in hauling up the boats and nets which had been used during the night, whilst others were preparing their tackle and trimming their sails for a fresh start. No one was idle; for even the old women had brought out their spindles, and the wives and children were engaged in work or play.

'Look there, Rachel! there is our padre,' said an old woman to a little thing of ten years old, who played round her spindle. 'He is just stepping into the boat. Antonino is to take him over to Capri. Holy Maria! how sleepy the venerable pastor looks.' Thus saying, she greeted a little benevolent-looking priest, who was just seating himself in a boat, after having carefully lifted his long black robe and spread it on the bench. The men on the shore paused in their work to see the departure of their pastor, who nodded and greeted right and left.

'Why does he go to Capri, grandmamma?' asked the child. 'Have the people there no priest, that they must borrow ours?'

'Silly child!' said the old woman; 'they have plenty of priests over there, and the most beautiful churches, and even a hermit, which we have not. But there is a noble lady who lived here for some time, and was so ill, that more than once it was thought she could not recover, and the priest had to go to her with the Host. However, the Holy Virgin succoured her; she is now strong and well again, and bathes in the sea every day. When she went from this place over to Capri, she gave

a great heap of ducats to the church and to the poor, and would not go till the padre had promised to continue his visits to her there, that she might confess to him. She has wonderful confidence in him, and we may consider ourselves fortunate in keeping him as a pastor; for he has the talents of an archbishop, and many of the highest in the land inquire after him. The Madonna be with him!' Wherupon she again nodded towards the little boat, which was just pushing off from the shore.

'Shall we have fine weather, my son?' inquired the little priest, looking doubtfully towards Naples.

'The sun has not yet risen,' replied the young owner of the boat; 'it will soon clear away the mist.'

'Then hasten on, that we may arrive before the heat of the day.'

Antonino seized the long oar to push the boat into deep water, but suddenly stopped and looked up the steep path which led from the beach to the little town of Sorrento. The slight form of a girl was visible hastening down the steps, and waving a handkerchief. She carried a little bundle under her arm, and her dress was plain in the extreme; but the head thrown haughtily back, and the noble cut of the features, contrasted strangely with her apparent poverty. The black braids of her hair were crossed above her forehead, like the diadem to which she seemed born.

'Why are we waiting?' asked the priest.

'There is a woman coming towards the boat who wants to go to Capri, if you do not object, padre. We shall not go any the slower, for she is a light little thing, scarcely eighteen years of age.' At this moment the girl stepped from behind the wall which enclosed the winding path.

'Laurella!' said the priest; 'what has she to do in Capri?' Antonino shrugged his shoulders. The girl advanced hastily with her eyes on the ground.

'How do you do, La Rabbia!' cried several of the young sailors. They would have said more, had not the presence of the priest restrained them; for the silent scornful way in which the girl received their greeting seemed to irritate the rude fellows.

'How do you do, Laurella?' said the priest; 'how are you to-day? Do you wish to go to Capri?'

'With your permission, padre.'

'Ask Antonino—he is the owner of the boat. Every one is master of his own property, and God is Lord over us all!'

'Here is a half-carline,' said Laurella, without looking at the young boatman; 'can I go for that?'

'You want it more than I do,' murmured the young man, as he pushed aside some baskets of oranges to make room.

'I shall not go for nothing,' replied the girl, knitting her black eyebrows.

'Come, child,' said the priest; 'he is a good youth, and will not make himself rich at the expense of your little store. There, get in and sit down here by me. See, he has spread his jacket, that you may sit more comfortably: he did not do as much for me; but that is the way with young people—more care is taken of one little girl like you than of ten reverend gentlemen. Well, well, you need not excuse yourself, Tonino; this is always the way of the world!'

Laurella had meanwhile stepped into the boat and seated herself, but she pushed the jacket on one side without a word of thanks. The young sailor did not remove it, but murmured something between his teeth. He then pushed vigorously from the shore, and the little skiff flew out into the gulf.

'What have you got in that bundle?' asked the priest, while they sailed across the water, which was just now glistening in the first rays of the sun.

'Silk, thread, and a bit of a loaf, padre. I am to sell the silk to a woman in Anacapri who makes ribbon, and the thread to some one else.'

'Did you spin it yourself?'

'Yes, padre.'

'If I remember right, you have also learnt to make ribbons?'

'Yes, padre; but my mother is so much worse that I cannot leave the house, and we are not able to buy a loom for ourselves.'

'Oh! is she worse? When I was with you at Easter, she was sitting up.'

'The spring is always the worst time with her. Ever since the great storm and the earthquake, she has suffered so much, as to be obliged to keep her bed.'

'Indeed! then you must be earnest in prayer to the Virgin for her, and be good and industrious, that your prayers may be heard.' After a pause, he continued: 'As you were coming down to the shore they shouted, "How do you do, La Rabbia!" Why do they call you so? It is not a pretty name for a Christian girl, who should be soft, mild, and gentle.' Her dark face crimsoned with blushes, and her eyes flashed.

'They mock me because I will not dance, and sing, and talk nonsense, like other girls. Why cannot they leave me alone? I do them no harm.'

'But you should be courteous to every one. Perhaps you may not like to dance and sing like others whose lives are happier; but even hearts oppressed with sadness may give a kind word.' She looked down, and contracted her brows, as if to hide the dark eyes beneath. For some time they continued their way in silence. The sun now shone brilliantly over the mountains; the summit of Vesuvius rose above the mist; and the houses in the orange-gardens around Sorrento looked dazzling white in the morning rays.

'Have you heard nothing more of that painter, Laurella—that Neapolitan who wished to marry you?' asked the priest.

She shook her head.

'He came once to take your picture; why did you refuse to allow him?'

'What did he want it for? There are many girls more beautiful than I am. And, then, who knows what he would have done with it? My mother said he might bewitch me, and injure my life, perhaps even hurt my soul.'

'Do not believe such sinful things,' said the priest earnestly. 'Are you not always in the hands of God, without whose will not a hair of your head falls; and can a man like that, with a mere picture in his hand, be more powerful than our Heavenly Father? Besides that, you might have known he wished you well, or would he have asked you in marriage?'

The girl was silent.

'And why did you refuse to marry?' continued the priest, after a pause. 'He was a good and handsome man, and would have supported your mother much better than you can do with the trifles you earn by spinning and silk-winding.'

'We are poor people,' replied Laurella vehemently; 'and my mother has been so long ill, we should only have been a burden to him. Besides, I am not fit to be a signora. When his friends came to visit him, he would have been ashamed of me.'

'How you talk! I tell you that he was an excellent man; and, besides, he would have come to live in Sorrento. You will not easily find such another: he seemed as if sent from heaven to succour you.'

'I do not want a husband; I shall never marry!' she said disdainfully, and as if speaking to herself.

'Have you made a vow, or are you going into a convent?'

She shook her head.

'People are right in calling you headstrong. Do you consider that you are not alone in the world, and that

you make the illness and poverty of your mother only more bitter by your obstinacy? What good reason could you have for refusing the honest man who wished to support you? Answer me, Laurella.'

'I have a reason,' said she in a low and hesitating voice, 'but I cannot tell it.'

'Not tell it?—not to me?—to your father-confessor? You know I always seek your good—do you not, Laurella?'

She nodded.

'Then unburden your heart, my child. If you are right, I will be the first to command you; but you are young, and know little of the world, and may afterwards regret having thrown away your happiness for some childish fancy.' She cast a hasty glance towards the young man, who, busy with his oar, sat in the bow of the boat, his woollen cap drawn down over his eyes. He was gazing on the sea, and seemed occupied with his own thoughts.

The priest saw her look, and bent down his ear.

'You did not know my father,' she whispered, and her eyes were full of gloom.

'Your father! why, he died when you were scarcely ten years old, I think! What has your father, whose soul, I trust, is in Paradise, to do with your obstinacy?'

'You did not know him, padre! You do not know that to him alone is my mother's illness owing!'

'How so?' inquired the priest with surprise.

'Because he beat and ill-treated her. I remember well the nights when he would come home in a perfect fury. She never spoke a word, and did all he wished; but he would beat her till my heart nearly broke. I used to draw the covering over my head, and pretend to be asleep; but, in truth, I cried all night. And when he saw her lying on the floor, his manner would suddenly change; he would raise her, and clasp her in his arms, close to his heart, till she cried out half suffocated. My mother forbade me to say a word about it then; but it had such an effect upon her, that, ever since his death, many years ago, she has never regained her health; and if she dies—which Heaven forbid!—I know who will have killed her.'

The little priest shook his head, and seemed uncertain how far he should acknowledge the justice of the girl's reasoning. At last, he said: 'Forgive him, my child, as your mother has forgiven him. Do not let your thoughts dwell on such sad scenes, Laurella; better times are in store for you, and all this will be forgotten.'

'Never! I shall never forget it!' she said shuddering. 'And it is this which has determined me to remain unmarried, padre. I will not be subject to one who will ill-treat me one moment and caress me the next. If any were now to attempt to do either the one or the other, I should know how to defend myself; but my mother would not do so, because she loved him. I will love no one well enough to endure such things from him.'

'What a child you are to talk such nonsense!' replied the priest. 'Are all men like your father, who gave way to every whim and passion, and did, in truth, ill-treat your mother? Have you not seen numbers of excellent men in the neighbourhood, and women who live in perfect unity and peace with their husbands?'

'Ah! they appear to do so; but no one knew my father's conduct to my mother: she would rather have died a thousand deaths than have uttered a word of complaint, and all because she loved him. If it be love which closes one's lips, so that one dare not cry out for help, and which makes one defenceless against greater injuries than would be endured from an enemy, then, as I have said before, I will never give up my heart and liberty to any man.'

'I tell you, you are an ignorant child, and do not understand what you are talking of. Your heart will

not ask you whether you will love or not: when the time comes, all these notions will then give way.' After a pause, he again continued: 'And did you tell that painter—did you tell him that you feared his harshness?'

'His eyes looked just like my father's when asking forgiveness of my mother, and trying to make it up with her. I know those eyes: they can be feigned even by a man who beats the wife who has never done him any harm; and I shuddered when I saw them again.' After this, she remained silent, and the priest followed her example. He was thinking of much good advice that he could give to the girl; but the presence of the young sailor, who, towards the end of the conversation, had become apparently restless, closed his mouth.

In about the space of two hours, they arrived in the little harbour of Capri. Antonino carried the padre through the surf to the shore; but Laurella would not wait till he had waded back to fetch her: she lifted her little skirt, took her wooden shoes in her right hand, the bundle in her left, and splashed sturdily through the water.

'I shall remain some time at Capri to-day,' said the priest, 'and you need not wait for me, my son. Indeed, I may possibly not return till to-morrow. Laurella, salute your mother for me when you get home; I shall visit her before the week is out. I suppose you return before night?'

'If there be any opportunity,' said the girl, as she arranged something about her dress.

'You know that I must get back,' said Antonino, in what was intended for a very indifferent tone. 'I shall wait for you till vespers; and if you are not here by that time, it does not matter to me.'

'You must go back, Laurella,' put in the little priest; 'you must not leave your mother alone all night. Have you far to go now?'

'To Anacapri, to a vineyard.'

'Ah! then our roads do not lie together. I am bound for Capri. The Madonna bless you, my child; and you, too, my son.' Laurella kissed his hand, and uttered a farewell, in which the priest and Antonino might claim an equal share; but the young boatman did not seem to perceive it. He took off his cap to the priest, but did not even look at Laurella. However, when they had both left him, his eyes, but for a moment, followed the priest as he toiled wearily over the shingles, and then they were turned with an eager look to the hilly road on the right, up which toiled the girl, her hands over her eyes, to protect them from the scorching rays of the sun.

Before the path was lost between the rocks, she stood still for a moment, as though to take breath, and looked around her. The shore lay at her feet; she was surrounded by the wild island scenery, and the blue ocean gleamed in more than ordinary splendour; indeed, it was a view worthy of some attention. As such would have it, her eyes, passing over Antonino's boat, met the gaze of its owner fixed upon herself. They both made a movement, as though they would excuse themselves for the accident, and then the girl continued her walk with firmly closed lips.

It was an hour after noon, and Antonino had already sat for two hours on the bench before the little public-house frequented by the fishermen. Something exciting must have been passing in his thoughts; for every five minutes he jumped up, stepped into the sunlight, and looked carefully along the roads which led to the right and left towards the two towns of the island.

'The weather seems doubtful,' said he to the hostess, by way of excuse; 'it is clear for the moment, but I know how to trust the colour of the sky. It looked just so before the last great storm, when I had so much difficulty in getting the English family safe to land. Do you remember it?'

'No,' said the woman.

'Well, then, just think of my words, if the weather changes to-night.' A pause ensued, interrupted by the hostess, who inquired:

'Are there many families over at your place yet?'

'They are just beginning to arrive,' was the reply: 'we have had hard times hitherto.'

'It is a late spring. I wonder if you have earned as much as we folks of Capri?'

'I should not have contrived to dine even twice a week on macaroni, if I had to depend solely on my boat,' replied Antonino. 'A letter or two to be taken to Naples, or to row out a gentleman occasionally to fish, was all I could find to do. But you know my uncle owns the large orange-garden, and he is a rich man. "Tonino," he said to me, "you shall never know want as long as I live; and after my death, I have cared for you." And thus, with God's help, I have got through the winter.'

'Has your uncle any children?'

'No; he never married, and was long absent in foreign lands, where he got together many a solid piaster. He proposes now to commence a large fishery, and put me at the head of it, to look after his rights.'

'Then you are a lucky and a happy man, Antonino,' remarked the hostess. The young seaman shrugged his shoulders.

'Each one has his own burden to bear,' said he, as he again arose and looked anxiously on all sides, though he must have known a squall could come but from one quarter.

'I shall bring you another bottle: your uncle can pay for it,' said the hostess smiling.

'Only a glass, thank you, for your wine is somewhat fiery; my head is already quite hot from it.'

'Pooh! it will not affect your blood; you can drink as much as you like. Ah, here comes my husband! You must sit awhile longer, and chat with him.'

And there, true enough, came the sturdy owner of the little inn, his net hanging over his shoulder, and a red cap above his curly hair. He had been taking some fish to the before-mentioned lady of rank, to set before the little priest of Sorrento. As soon as he caught sight of his guest, he waved him a hearty welcome, and, seating himself beside him on the bench, began talking and asking questions. His wife had just brought out a second bottle of genuine Capri, when footsteps were heard on the sand, and Laurella appeared coming from Anacapri. She nodded hastily, and then stood hesitatingly for a moment. Antonino rose.

'There is a girl of Sorrento, who came early this morning with our worthy pastor, and is obliged to return before night to her sick mother.'

'Well, well; it is a long time till night,' said the fisherman: 'she will not refuse a glass of wine. Hollo! wife; bring another glass.'

'Thank you; I would rather not,' said Laurella, still standing at some distance.

'Pour it out, wife—pour it out; she will be persuaded.'

'Let her alone,' said the young seaman; 'she is obstinate. If she determines not to do a thing, heaven and earth will not move her; and herewith he took a hasty leave, ran down to the boat, loosened the sail, and then stood awaiting his companion. She nodded again to the hostess of the inn, and then approached the boat with hesitating steps. She stopped and looked around on all sides, as though hoping or expecting the arrival of further company, but the shore was untenanted. The fishermen were either sleeping or out in pursuit of their business; some few of the women and children were sitting within their doorways, dozing or spinning; and strangers who had come across in the morning, were awaiting the cooler portion of the day for their return. Laurella was not, however,

allowed much time to gaze around her, for before she could prevent it, Antonino had taken her in his arms, and bore her like an infant to the boat. He sprang in after her, and with a few strokes of the oar, they were already in the open water.

THE LONDON NECROPOLIS.

ABOUT the time the late Board of Health was proposing its government plan of extra-mural burial, a number of barristers, city merchants, and others, formed themselves into a company for the better burial of the metropolitan dead. They were men of business habits, and their first important step was in the right direction. They purchased a great tract of heathy moorland in the adjacent county of Surrey; in this way, securing the primary requisites for the necropolis of a vast city—namely, extent, beauty, privacy, and due remoteness in conjunction with accessibility. Such was the beginning of the London Necropolis Company, and of their cemetery at Woking, in Surrey. We shall now describe a visit made there a few days since; premising thus much, that we write for no other purpose than to disseminate what we believe to be interesting information.

The August morning rises dully, betokening rain; but the sun gradually comes forth, so that between nine and ten o'clock, when we reach Charing Cross, there seems the promise of a fine autumn day. This increases as we approach Westminster; the cheerful sun gilding the pinnacles of the grand old abbey, smoothing down, as it seems, the rugged brick of the unfinished clock-tower of the new Houses of Parliament, clearing away the mist which yet lingers on the muddy river, and shining with harvest-like splendour as we cross the Bridge and pass down the Westminster Road. Here the Necropolis Company have their newly erected station, in connection with the South-western Railway.

Our friends arriving, we step from the waiting-room on to the platform. It is eleven o'clock, and the train is getting ready. The passenger-carriages are, at this end of the platform, nearest the line; at the other end, which is the extremity of the station, rests the massive tender, with its for ever quiet passengers. In this, the compartments for the coffins are divided from each other, like those in second and third class passenger-carriages, and, like them, have doors at either side. On one of these latter being opened, we see the boxes or cells for the coffins, one above another, each coffin having a distinct compartment, and being thus as private—the carriage-door being closed—and as much to itself, as though conveyed in a separate hearse. For further security during their rapid transit, the coffins are secured by massive straps.

The privacy and quietude with which this whole business of receiving, conveying, and depositing the coffins in the tender is effected, cannot be too highly commended. These will be found legitimate causes of success, as well as the cleanliness and order observable—for, paradox as it may seem, the eye of grief is profoundly critical. Though we must have been quite an hour at the station, and travelled down to Woking with eighteen coffins in the funeral-van, we saw nothing, unless one had looked for it, even to hint that such was our burden, till we beheld at a distance one or two coffins enshrouded in palls, being drawn on light-wheeled biers to their final resting-places amidst the heathery undulations of the 'sacred field.'

The rooms on a level with the platform are offices and first-class waiting-rooms, each of the latter being precisely alike. The floor below contains offices and second-class waiting-rooms; and the ground-floor is occupied by offices and rooms for third-class passengers, undertakers, and attendants. These are decorated in a manner similar to the first and second class rooms.

The coffins upon arrival are conveyed to a recess, and thence raised to the level of the railway platform on a lift worked by steam. If the corpse should reach the station the night previous to burial—earlier than which none is received—there are special recesses on the several floors for their reception; the lift ascending to the second or third floor, as the case may be, of a second or first class funeral. In this way, with entire privacy, bodies are moved either to their temporary resting-places or to the funeral-tender.

If we recollect rightly, one of the clauses in the extra-mural plan of burial suggested by the Board of Health, was to the effect, that all bodies, upon the lapse of so many hours after death, should pass into the official hands appointed by government. There was great wisdom in this proposal. Those acquainted with the miserable house-accommodation of the London poor, know only too well the horrors consequent upon the retention of the dead amidst the living for days together, and the advantages which would arise were there public receptacles for the dead previous to burial. The need for such places would be less urgent, had the majority of those constrained to live in London a prospect of better house-accommodation than what they possess at present; but this contingent can only be slow and progressive, as associations like that existing for the Improvement of the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes can but work partial effects. As such is the case, let us hope that the Metropolitan Local Management Act just passed, will in its advanced modifications secure to itself the power of action on this point. Indeed, at the period of its first institution, some such plan as that referred to was proposed by the Necropolis Company; but the inhabitants of the parish or parishes in which it was settled to erect the railway terminus, rose against the idea of dead bodies being retained in their vicinity. Of course, such retention would have been only temporary, under due rules, and in fitting receptacles; still, the opposition was too serious to be withstood. Thus one sees that associations, just as individuals, have to war against prejudice and ignorance, when any radical improvement is suggested. If education has to be prayed for in any one direction more than another, it is in this which bears relation to death, and all the barbarism, ignorance, and superstition connected therewith.

But the train is ready, and we start. A few hundred feet brings us into the main-line, and we make rapid progress along the most beautiful, perhaps, of England's many railways. Mile by mile, as we leave the low-lying levels of the Thames, the landscape on either hand increases in beauty. At Kingston, we get rich glimpses of the wooded scenery of Berkshire; and further on, to Esher, and so to Weybridge, stretch out those russet downs so peculiar to the southern counties of England. These are sometimes intersected with russet cornfields; at others, with farms or clustered cottages. There, in the distance, winds a silvery rivulet, which, approaching the railway as we pass on, is seen to lose itself in little sedgy pools, gay with countless marsh-flowers. Here, we dip into a cutting, down whose bushy slopes the wild convolvulus twine their snowy flowers; and coming out again upon the level, we see the heath stretching away in a wild expanse of undulating swells, and blue and solitary distances. Soon after passing Weybridge, the estate of the Necropolis Company commences, and from hence it extends for upwards of four miles along the line of the South-western Railway towards Farnborough and Pirbright. The train, climbing, as it seems, an undulating swell, and catching picturesque glimpses of the little river Wey and the Basingstoke Canal, has a vast table-land before it, broken into ridges and acclivities, and encircled, in a great measure, by green and solitary hills. Through this scene, the train now proceeds for two miles: in some parts, the heathery moor creeps

close beside the rail; in others, we pass cornfields, beaten low by rain or wind; by gravelly hollows, where excavators have been at work. We now begin to catch glimpses of the cemetery, which lies to our left. We see the road which divides the consecrated from the unconsecrated ground; the fence which encloses the 400 acres at present set apart for burial; the church and chapel, so distinguished in name, but in reality precisely similar; the lovely sward-clothed knolls on which they stand; the refreshment-houses, with their deep verandas; the chaplain's house; the range of stables, with the bailiff's house attached; and a portion of the young plantations, flower-beds, new-turfed lawns, and avenues stretching away acre after acre.

The estate contains nearly 2200 acres, divided into two parts, situated at a distance of about two miles from each other. Both are intersected by the railway—the one containing 1700 acres; the other, about 500. Ultimately, the larger section will be devoted entirely to use as a cemetery, thus supplying London with a place of sepulchre for centuries; whilst the lesser section, surrounding, as it does, the Woking station, is to be devoted to building purposes—the soil thereabouts affording excellent clay for bricks, which are already made by the company, not only for their own use, but for transmission to the towns on the southern coast. All the enormous mass of draining-tiles which have been used, and the piles of the same that we see lying about the grounds, have thus been produced.

But the train, with its solemn burden, now leaves the main-line, and enters that which leads into the cemetery. We wind our short way amidst newly formed beds of American plants, young plantations, piles of gravel, and embankments; and stop before the station or refreshment-house attached to the unconsecrated ground—the consecrated ground and church in the distance having one precisely similar. It is a pretty simple building, of but one story, running round three sides of an asphalt-paved square, raised level to the floor of the railway-carriages, and gay in the midst with a circular bed of American evergreens. It is framed entirely of wood, and has a deep and prettily fringed veranda running round the inner side. This branching-out at either end for some way along the platform, gives shelter and space at the side nearest the church for small rooms, into which the coffins are temporarily lifted. At the rear of these respectively, the biers await; and thus screened from vulgar curiosity, the funerals take their way, and are, as it were, unseen until they approach the sacred edifice.

But we alight, and crossing the smooth dry pavement, enter a first-class waiting-room. It is as lightsome and airy as it is possible to be. Through open doors, and windows slid back to the full, the divine sunlight flows in; takes from black-clothed chairs, table, and settee, a portion of their lugubriousness; and falling on the bright red of the partially carpeted floor, climbs up the walls and to the roof with a hue of warmth and light. In winter, these rooms are warmed by pretty-looking stove-like fireplaces. A few servants move quietly to and fro from the rooms in the centre, bearing such simple refreshment as the mourners need.

As we quietly sit awaiting our conductors, the extreme balminess and freshness of the air strike us as remarkable. It may be that, having so lately breathed the atmosphere of London, we more quickly perceive this scented freshness; but certain it is, that much as we know of England, we recollect no atmosphere more strikingly pure. It smells of heather, and of the wild commons and hills across which it has come sweeping from the sea. Added to this, the intense stillness of the place lends a charm.

Passing out again to the platform, we find that the tender and carriages, having deposited a portion of their burden here, have proceeded onwards, drawn by

horses on the rail, to the consecrated section of the cemetery. So we wind our way amidst flower-borders, vast beds of American plants—such as magnolias, rhododendrons, azaleas, and many other hardy exotics—up the ascent towards the chapel. Service is at the moment being performed, and we do not enter, but linger instead upon the knoll around it, to gaze upon the loveliness of the scene. Its picturesqueness cannot be surpassed. The heather—short, crisp, and dun, for it is not yet in full blossom—clothes the broken-surfaced ground for an immense distance, except where cultivation has stepped in. Here, we have woods—there, fields—beyond, lies more woodland—and then comes the lengthened stretch of hills about Bagshot and Wansborough. To our rear, other uplands rise—Chobham Ridge and the hills about Weybridge. This extensive radius of hills gives all the effects of an amphitheatre. As we stand, we in fact look over an extensive southern down—in part called Woking Heath—lying about five miles from Guildford and its exquisitely picturesque neighbourhood. Till the reign of James I., Woking, with some other adjacent parishes, comprised a manor retained by the crown. As its soil at this day indicates, it was originally forest-land. It was so at the time of the Conquest; and by the amount of swine fed, its growth of oak and beech trees must have been very large. On a picturesque site near the little river Wey, stood—till within a few years—the old manorial house which seems to have been the favourite retreat of several of the minions of our weakest kings. Here came the De-la-Spencers and others. Wolsey was residing here when the news reached him of the pope's gift of a cardinal's hat; and Charles II.'s Duchess of Cleveland occasionally made it her residence. Finally, it passed by purchase into the family of the present Lord Onslow, by whom it was sold, in 1853, to the Necropolis Company. These are its past fortunes; its future are of still deeper interest. Here will be the graves of countless generations yet unborn; here, amidst the peace and solemnity of nature, those who never knew what either was, will return to dust; here, from reeking courts, alleys, and mean rooms, the insentient body will rest in the summer's sunshine, and have over it the heath of flowers; and here, as elsewhere, man will work out, though unknowingly, a mighty law. Here he will turn a desert into a garden—waste, into the most fruitful land, which, in ages yet distant, may be golden with prolific harvests.

Descending the swarded side of the knoll, we trace future avenues, recently planted with various kinds of trees, some with Irish yew. But the cheerful American evergreens predominate largely; hence there will be greenness in winter, especially as in the neighbourhood this class of plants flourishes to a vast extent. This corner of Surrey is the garden of the azalea and the rhododendron. At Knap's Hill, not three miles distant, is the famous nursery of Mr Michael Waterer, who, some forty years ago, fenced in 120 acres of bog and heath, and converted them into the marvellous garden it is. Here the noble magnolia, with rhododendrons, azaleas, kalmias, andromedas, and many other hardy exotics, obtain a vigorous growth, and display in May and June an entire mass of blossom, which perfumes the air for miles.

We saw a considerable number of men at work; but in the planting-season, an average of 600 are daily employed. As to the graves, their indicating hillocks look as yet but few in number in so vast a space; yet the burials, which are rapidly increasing, average for the two sections of the cemetery about thirty a day, Sunday inclusive—making a total of 210 per week. Rather curious in all statistical matters, we inquire if one day more than another gives a larger amount of burials; and we find that Friday is the day when London pours out its dead. Whether this fact is a general one, we

cannot say; but it is worthy of attention, particularly if any data in the Registrar-general's weekly reports were found to bear relation. Some of the graves lie amidst future copes and belts of woodland; others, amidst lawns yet unturfed; others, more beautifully still, amidst the blossoming heather; and others, where the magnolia and azalea will give shade. In either sections of the cemetery, the grave-stones and monuments are but sparsely scattered, and, to our thinking, the less there are of this class of decorations, the better.

Crossing the fenced-in roadway to the consecrated ground, we ascend to the church. The clergyman and officials have just passed out with a funeral-train, and so we enter. The building is simple in the extreme. In figure, it is cruciform, the transverse being pierced with windows, the beam having doors at either end, which, standing open, let in the sunshine and the lovely scene on either side. The transoms of the roof are of oak, or of wood stained to have that effect, as in the old wooden churches of the middle ages. The floor is of brickwork, tesselated black and red; and all the decorations are in the same simple taste.

In this, the consecrated ground, several London parishes have allotted space—St Giles in the Fields and Bloomsbury being amongst the number. These plots the company have afforded free, their only profit arising from the small burial-fees. Some funerals from these parishes take place whilst we are here; and as we proceed, we reach a line of graves. They are dug side by side, with a due space of earth between; and though fully six feet deep, their floors and sides are as dry as a chamber-closet. This, of course, is owing to drainage, and, in a degree, to the nature of the soil, which is a crust of peat-earth resting on sand—the result of primeval seas and succeeding forests, and thus well adapted for burial purposes. When we recollect the mingled mud and water which fill so many of the graves in the cemeteries about London, we can better appreciate this decency of sepulchre; more particularly that every corpse has a separate grave, instead of being one of a mass in the horrible system of 'bedding up' so long pursued, and so often exposed in the statements made to parliament.

But even if the stringent facts of health, decency, and the advance of public opinion in favour of extra-mural burial, be set aside, that of cheapness will recommend it. By a clause in the company's act, the expenses of a burial effected at the cost of any union or parish, are limited to the sum of 14s. Therein is included every charge of reception, transmission, interment, and the conveyance and return of two friends or attendants. A first-class grave in perpetuity, inclusive of the conveyance of the body, funeral-service, and interment, is L2, 10s.; that of a second-class single grave, alike inclusive of expenses, is L1. The charges for the conveyance and return of mourners are limited to the most moderate sum. Or the company undertake the whole business of a funeral at defined charges; thus relieving relatives from a most painful and onerous duty, and obviating, in nine cases out of ten, inevitable extortion. The survivors of the dead, if so they will, have but to post a letter, enclosing a certain sum, and they are free from all further care; in addition to the assurance that the remains of those they loved will become dust under the pure skies, and surrounded by the loveliness of nature. As a matter of course, this and other burial companies are stringently opposed by the low-class undertakers, who propagate the most astounding nonsense with respect to them, and of which nothing but the dreary ignorance of the lower classes makes them the dupes. But in this, as in all other questions of public utility, the truth has nothing to fear.

Monopoly will be here out of the question; for other burial companies have been lately formed; and others will undoubtedly arise, now the new law of Limited

Liability gives facility to combination of capital. So far, however, the cemetery at Woking, through its distance, vast extent with accessibility combined, and its extraordinary beauty of situation, is really what it has styled itself—the NECROPOLIS OF LONDON. But it may be, in the fulness of time, when the facilities of transit are enlarged, incorporations will carry out the dead of London to still more distant heaths and solitary lands; or it may be, that in a still more distant time, advanced chemical knowledge will step in, and return, by some instantaneous process, the body to its primary elements, and thus make graves and their corruption things only of record.

We now retrace our steps to the pretty verandaed building whence we started. We stay awhile upon the untouched heather, to notice its many varieties, its richness of colour and blossom, its fragrance, and the myriads of wild-bees busy in gathering honey from the tiny flowers. Their hum and stir, together so harmonious, are audible even to ears that hear so dully as ours. But Woking Heath, even in very old days, was celebrated for its sweet-smelling plants. Hither, in the season, a vast number of country-people used to come, to gather a plant between a myrtle and bay, for the purpose of scenting linen, preferring it to southernwood or lavender. After temporary rest and refreshment, we go by the return-train to town, as far as Esher, where we stay till evening.

It may be a misnomer to use the words pleasure and pleasant with respect to a day passed at a cemetery, however far from town; but this has certainly been a most cheerful and pleasant one to us. We have no fear of, or dismal notions touching death. We believe it to be a law of nature, full of the sublimest beneficence—a change that leads our spiritual portion to such new scenes as we may have fitted ourselves for by our actions here. As for ourselves, we hope to see Woking again some summer-day, when its azaleas and its rhododendrons are in scent and bloom; and one day we shall travel there a last journey, when a little more of our work is accomplished, and our pen laid down for ever.

THE BRISTOL MILKWOMAN.

If my commendation be thought extravagant, qualify it, dear madam, with the reflection that it is bestowed on one who writes under complicated disadvantages; who is unacquainted with a single rule of grammar, and who has never seen a dictionary.—*Hannah More to Mrs Montague.*

THE metropolis of the west had long been famous for its race of merchant-princes and the sons of genius nurtured within its walls. By the literary world, it was still regarded with undiminished interest, as the birthplace of Chatterton, when a new aspirant to literary fame, still more lowly born, arose in the person of Anne Yearsley, whom her fellow-citizens delighted to call 'the poet milkwoman of Bristol.'

The class to which Anne Yearsley belonged were peculiar to the west country, and more especially to the city of Bristol. They inhabited the villages adjacent, and poured into that city from six to nine A.M., uttering, as they sped along, their still remembered cry of, 'Hae any muilk,' in the purest Doric of the Somerset and Gloucestershire dialect. Their costume was peculiar. We see a clumsy representation of it in original editions of Izaak Walton. Pepys has left a word-sketch of a similar one, as worn by the gay maskers who frequented Tunbridge fair in his day. The milkwoman demanding her score in Hogarth's Distressed Poet, and she who aids the discord that drives his Enraged Musician mad, are thus attired. The gown, some gaudy chintz of the most pronounced pattern, low

at the bosom, short in the sleeves, open in front, was constantly drawn up through the pocket-holes, to display a gay, quilted kirtle of crimson, the chief pride of its wearer. A neckerchief of orange silk clothed the bosom. The shoes had broad buckles, and wooden heels of unusual height. A cap of ample frill, was surmounted by a very low-crowned gipsy-beaver, encircled by a coronal of broad ribbon. On this very graceful head-gear, they balanced their snow-white wooden pail, hung round with glittering measures of all sizes, and brimful with the luscious fluid, fresh from the meadows, rich, and yellow almost as the petals of the buttercup which floated on its surface. I never pass by one of those disgusting establishments called a London dairy, with its stalls of melancholy, imprisoned, dirty kine, and dirtier attendants, without involuntarily adverting to my west-country milkmaids.

It may readily be imagined that a city so ancient retained many traditional usages long neglected elsewhere. Accordingly, Gunpowder Treason was celebrated with almost its original fierce demonstration; and on the birth-festival of King Charles, Bristol, overhung by the spoils of adjacent oak-groves, resembled a city in a wood. The sports of May-day were not forgotten. I remember in my boyhood, how, on the last day of April, young and old went out 'a cowslipping' in the meadows, returning in groups at eventide, dusty and footsore. To be the bearer into town of the largest 'cowslip stick,' was considered a great triumph among the lads and lasses of Bristol. This often measured a yard in length—being a hazel-wand, slit in four, to hold the stalks, while the petals, smoothly ranged outwards, looked like a great golden staff. Part of the spoil was, on reaching home, quickly tied up into what the children called 'tosties,' or flower-balls; a part was reserved to deck the May-pole. By a custom ancient as the days of Queen Bess, the city inn-keepers lent to their milkmaids any amount of silver-plate with which to celebrate the coming May. In no instance was this confidence abused. Indeed, the custom had grown into something like a privilege. The May-pole being erected on a sylvan spot of unrivalled beauty, well known to Bristolians as the Downs, these maskers, fantastically attired, and bearing aloft flowers, flagons, and tankards, mingled into one huge pyramid, proceeded thither with musicians, ere sunrise, to dance the morris. That over, they restored the borrowed plate; donned a sober habit; and by eight o'clock, were again pursuing their rustic vocation, with nicely-balanced pails, through the city's narrow streets.

Such was the costume and the calling of our poetess, and of her mother, likewise a milkwoman, who had catered for the breakfast-tables of the Bristol lieges in the reign of Queen Anne. At the period of Anne Yearsley's introduction to literature, though only twenty-four years of age, she was already the mother of six children. Her maiden-name has not survived; her husband occupied no higher position than that of farm-labourer; and one is at a loss to understand what could have influenced an intellect like hers to unite itself to a helmate in all respects so uncongenial.

They resided in a cottage upon Clifton Hill, a romantic spot, commanding a prospect of vast extent over the hills and fertile valleys of Somerset. It seems to be an established law, to which there can be no exception, that prophets and poets are alike unhonoured among those who know them best. Our milkwoman shared this common lot. 'Her neighbours,' writes one who at an early period interested himself in her fate, 'did not esteem her in anywise different from

themselves. "She was," said they, "active and industrious; always busy with her cows." Her mother, she herself told me, was a woman of sense, delighting in books, and hence originated her own passion for reading. On asking her how she managed to procure books, she replied: "From her betters, who kindly lent them." She has no manners of society—how should she? But when seated in the meadows at morn and evening milking, she warbles her wood-notes wild with a beauty and taste which cultivation might ripen into the powers of a siren.

Walton, too, had his milkmaid. Our readers will recall—though possibly the worthy citizen who writes thus, did not—that one of the pleasantest passages in the old fisherman's delightful book is the expression of his admiration of her simple rustic song. "As I left this place, and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me. 'Twas a handsome milkmaid, that had not attained to so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of things that will never be; but she cast away all care, and sang like a nightingale: her voice was good, and the ditty fitted for it."

Providence, however, had decreed that the stern realities of life should press heavily upon the poetess, and desolate her home. Before proceeding further, let me observe, that the credit of having rescued this child of genius from obscurity and wretchedness belongs to one, the tenor of whose life illustrates the great axiom, that piety without works is but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. On Hannah More's return from a visit to Mrs Montague—a name familiar to all the readers of Shakespeare—her servants told her that a poor woman, who used to call daily for the kitchen-refuse to feed her pig, was now, with her mother, husband, and children, slowly perishing for want; that they literally fed upon the refuse the swine did eat. The following day, she was shewn a copy of verses, said to have been written by this very person. Mrs More, although at first incredulous, hastened to discover the presumed author, from motives of benevolence. There was, besides, a 'natural and strongly expressed tone of misery in the verses, which seemed to fill the writer's mind,' whoever it might prove to be. Her generous intentions were anticipated. A philanthropic merchant of the city, whose name is frequently mentioned in the poems, had already become acquainted with her distress. It is said that the scene he encountered in the milkwoman's home, though familiar to the pages of fiction, was, happily, not often been realised, even in the annals of the poor. Her cows—the main dependence of a large family—had gone to satisfy the landlord's claims; the cottage, denuded of its humble plenishing, scarcely afforded a bed; before a fireless hearth sat the famished, dispirited husband; scattered around were six children crying and clamorous for bread; in one corner, on a heap of dirty straw, lay the aged grandmother, bedridden; while at the opposite side, struggling in the throes of childbirth, was she who bore the relation of daughter, wife, and mother to all these wretched beings. It is almost needless to say that succour came promptly and liberally; to one alone it came too late. The grandmother, overcome with joy at knowing that relief was secured, sank back and died.

This sad catastrophe seems to have ever dwelt in the poetess's recollection, and tinged with melancholy most of her subsequent compositions. In a poem addressed to Hannah More, under the name of Stella, she twice revives the circumstances of her parent's death.

Like the poor beetle, creep my hours away;
The journey closed, I shoot the gulf unknown,
To find a home, perhaps—a long-lost mother.
How does fond thought hang on her much-loved name,

And tear each fibre of my bursting heart.
Oh! dear supporter of my infant mind,
Whose nobler precept bade my soul aspire
To more than tinsel joy; the filial tear
Shall drop for thee, when pleasure loudest calls.
The dark sky loured, and the storms of life
Rose high with wildest roar; no voice was heard,
But horror's dismal train affrights our souls.
For see, from the dark caverns of the deep
Their grisly forms arise; the crown of Death
Shone horribly resplendent. See! they seize
A trembling, fainting, unresisting form,
Which hourly met their grasp; ah! spare her yet.
See, from the shore V— waves his friendly hand;
He's born to bless, and we may yet be happy:
Quick! let me clasp her to my panting heart,
And bear her swiftly o'er the beating wave.
In vain, in vain; some greater power unnerves
My feeble arm; inexorable Death,
Why wilt thou tear her from me? Oh! she dies,
Though V—'s dear name had lent a feeble glow
To her pale cheek—she owns him, and expires.
Tremendous stroke! this is thy pastime, Fate;
If shrinking atoms thus thy vengeance feel,
What the grand stroke of final dissolution? *

Again :

O nature! shriek no more;
I have no answer for thy thrilling voice;
Go, melt the soul less frozen in her powers,
And bid her weep o'er miseries not her own;
Hold up the fainting babe who sighs its wants,
So mutely incoherent; mark the head
Which age and woe bend tremulous to earth:
Whose lamp, now quivering in its socket, calls
In haste for aid, ne'er finds it, and goes out.

Pleased with her simple character, and the absence of all affection and pretence—"for," remarks the lady, "she neither attempted to raise my compassion by her distress, nor my admiration by her parts"—Mrs More became warmly interested in the poor milkwoman's fate. She found her, as we may reasonably suppose, to have been an insatiable reader, and "was surprised at the justness of her taste, a faculty least expected to exist. In truth," continues Mrs More, "her remarks on the books she has read are so accurate, and so consonant to the opinions of the best critics, that, from that very circumstance, they would appear trite and commonplace in any one familiar with habits of society; for, without having ever conversed with any one above her own level, she seems to possess the general principles of sound taste and just thinking. She never received any education, except that her brother taught her to write; had read the *Night Thoughts* and *Paradise Lost*, but was astonished to learn that Young and Milton were authors of anything else. Of Pope, she had seen the *Eloisa* only; and Dryden, Spenser, Thomson, and Prior to her were quite unknown, even by name. She knew a few of Shakespeare's plays, and spoke of a translation of the *Georgics* with the warmest poetic rapture. On her benefactress expressing surprise at some classical allusions in one of her poems, she said she had taken them from little ordinary prints that hung in a shop-window! Reader, imagine this untutored rustic, as she wends her homeward way, loitering at every print-stall, and drawing inspiration from the few tawdry productions which may be presumed to have comprised the art-collections of a provincial town in the year 1784!

The "wondrous tale of the milkwoman," to quote the language of one of her admirers, circulated rapidly through the literary coteries of the metropolis. Horace Walpole criticised her verses, and wrote complimentary notes, to which she replied by a poem on his *Castle of Otranto*. Beyond a single subscription

* *Night*, p. 6.

to her poems, he never did anything more. But Walpole was equally a literary trifler and a trifler with literary men—very desirous to be thought the friend of genius, while, cold and heartless, he denied that material aid without which patronage was worth nothing. Other distinguished persons of that period were more considerate. Mr Weller Pepys remitted her a handsome sum, in a letter thanking Hannah More for the pleasure he had derived from the perusal of Anne Yearsley's manuscript. The following passage, which paints a mind conscious of extraordinary powers vainly struggling to surmount the barrier of ignorance with which it is 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd,' seemed to him a novel and very interesting intellectual phenomenon:—

Oft, as I trod my native wilds alone,
Strong gusts of thought would rise, but rise to die;
The portals of the swelling soul, ne'er oped
By liberal converse, rude ideas strove
Awile for vent, but found it not, and died.
Thus rust the mind's best powers. Yon starry orbs,
Majestic ocean, flowery vales, gay groves,
Eye-wasting lawns, and heaven-attempting hills,
Which bound th' horizon and which curb the view;
All those, with beauteous imagery, awaked
My ravished soul to ecstacy untaught,
To all the transports the rapt sense can bear;
But all expired, for want of powers to speak,
All perished in the mind as soon as born,
Eras'd more quick than ciphers on the shore,
O'er which the cruel waves unheeded roll.*

Other acts of munificent kindness followed fast. The Duchess of Beaufort sent for her to Stoke; her Grace of Rutland, to Belvoir Castle; Lady Spencer and the Honourable Mrs Montague, to Bath; the Bishop of Salisbury, to his episcopal palace. 'The noble and munificent Duchess of Portland,' writes Hannah More, 'has sent me a £20 bank-note.' Anne, therefore, promised soon to be the richest poetess—certainly the richest milkwoman—in Great Britain.

It has too often been the just reproach of genius, that its possessors are clogged with a more than ordinary amount of human infirmity. Hers seems to have been an indomitable pride. Like her fellow-townsman and brother-poet—

The sleepless soul that perished in its pride—

she was influenced by an almost insane impatience under obligation; and whilst mother, husband, offspring, were slowly perishing from hunger, she struggled to defeat the kind intentions of her friends. During the dreary winter of 1783, and the famine which succeeded it—still recorded among the traditions of the west—Mrs Palmer of Bristol, one of those good Samaritans whose vocation is charity, offered her assistance. At once she shifted her residence to evade her. 'When she does call upon me,' says that kind lady, 'I can't persuade her to tell me where she lodges, nor induce her to eat, her pride is so great, although at the time there is famine in her looks, and I know she is near perishing.' This spirit seems to have rather elevated her in Mrs Palmer's estimation than otherwise; for she styled it a 'noble fierté' and liked her milkwoman never the worse. The reader of Chatterton's life will here recall how, only two days before poverty drove him to self-murder, his worthy landlady, Mrs Angel, almost with tears in her eyes, begged him to share her frugal dinner, knowing that he had not eaten for more than two days. But his proud and graceless spirit took offence; he assured her he was not hungry, and seemed indignant at her supposing he could be in distress.

She now began to express a very great amount of indignation that her new friends should still continue

to speak of her as the Bristol Milkwoman. She had long provided for herself a more classic distinction:

The swain neglects his nymph, yet knows not why;
The nymph, indifferent, mourns the freezing sky;
Alike insensible to soft desire,
She asks no warmth—but from the kitchen-fire;
Love seeks a milder zone; half-sunk in snow,
LACTILLA, shivering, tends her favourite cow.*

Again:

Such rapture filled LACTILLA's vacant soul,
When the bright Moralist† in softness drest
Opens all the glories of the mental world,
Deigns to direct the infant thought, to prune
The budding sentiment, uprear the stalk
Of feeble fancy, bid idea live,
Woo the abstracted spirit from its cares,
And gently guide her to the scenes of peace.
Mine was that balm, and mine the grateful heart,
Which breathes its thanks in rough but timid strains.

From a kindred degree of sensitiveness, she shrank from being represented by her friends as an object of pity, and mourns that their donations were not exclusively bestowed from personal regard, and as a tribute to her intellectual superiority:

My soul's ambitious, and its utmost stretch
Would be to own a friend—but that's denied.
Now, at this bold avowal, gaze, ye eyes,
Which kindly melted at my wo-fraught tale;
Start back, Benevolence, and shun the charge;
Soft-bending Pity, fly the sullen phrase,
Ungrateful as it seems. My abject fate
Excites the willing hand of Charity,
The momentary sigh, the pitying tear,
And instantaneous act of bounty bland,
To misery so kind; yet not to you,
Bounty or Charity, or Mercy mild,
The pensive thought applies fair Friendship's name;
That name which never yet could dare exist
But in equality.‡

An attempt was made to secure some permanent provision for Anne Yearsley's family, by publishing her early poems. The generous zeal with which Hannah More's large circle of friends seconded her intentions, soon produced a very large subscription, which includes many of those most illustrious for rank or talent of that day. It contained above a thousand names, and the money thus collected was placed in the Funds, under the joint names of More and Montague. But this arrangement, so judicious, proved most distasteful to its object, who had hoped the whole would be unconditionally surrendered to her use. It is scarcely to be credited, that a person who had previously shewn a decided unwillingness to accept pecuniary obligation, should all at once become possessed by the demon of avarice. Perhaps the vulgar greed of her family connections, who ignorantly beheld in that sum an inexhaustible mine of wealth, worried her into a manifestation of flagrant ingratitude, which justly alienated all her generous friends. I really regret to record, that she wrote or delivered the most unworthy messages and insinuations to one who had been her chief friend. 'The open and notorious ingratitude of the Milkwoman,' observes Hannah More, 'shocks me. There is hardly a species of slander the poor creature does not propagate. I am described as secretly jealous of her poetic talents, and as intending to defraud her children of the money subscribed after her death; and all this because, in my preface to her book, I allude to her as an object of charity, called her Milkwoman, and placed the money at interest, instead of allowing her to waste it. I confess my weakness; it goes to my heart: not

* *Clifton Hill, a Poem*, Jan. 1785; p. 108.

† Hannah More. ‡ Poems, p. 84.

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for my own sake, but for that of our common nature. So much for my inward feelings. As to resentment,' says this Christian philanthropist, 'I am trying to get a place for her husband, and to make up the sum I have raised—L.500. *Fate bene per soi* is a beautiful maxim.'

Mrs Montague's rejoinder was characteristic and amusing enough; more especially as she had at first been completely carried away by a generous enthusiasm, expressing the utmost anxiety that this noble creature should be rescued from unmerited obscurity. But a change came o'er the spirit of her dream. She now rejoices to think they shall soon be free from any connection with the Milkwoman; and has the same opinion about favours to the ungrateful-minded as the common people have about witches, that bestowing a gift upon such wretches gives them a power over you for evil. But for all this, she avows her intention never to be deterred from giving to distressed persons of talent, as long as she had anything to give.

Unwilling to confront those whose kindness she is represented to have so ill repaid, Anne Yearsley now withdrew to Melksham, in Wiltshire. She published a second edition of her poems about 1787; in the preface to which, says M. Lefebvre Cauchy, she rebuts the accusation of ingratitude, 'avec la vivacité d'un bon cœur, et l'énergie d'un poète offensé.' Many of her fellow-citizens deemed otherwise, and looked upon the apology but as a reiteration of previous calumnies. Shortly after, there appeared a drama, entitled *Earl Godwin*, which was represented on the Bristol stage with considerable applause. The gallant M. de Cauchy regards this production as a sort of dramatic phenomenon, 'une double singularité'; seeing, he observes, it is 'tragédie sans amour!—a tragedy without a love-scene—written in imitation of Shakespeare, by a peasant-woman of the humblest class.' He calls her La Laitière, a prettier sound than her own—Lactilla—and which, doubtless, was balm of Gilead to poor Anne's too sensitive feelings: even more so his 'Miss Anna'—had he not, in a line or two previous, recorded her being married, and the mother of seven children. Mrs Yearsley published also *The Royal Captives*, a romance of very considerable merit, which, as the introduction informs us, was discovered—à la Chatterton—in an old oak-chest. Verily, our literary predecessors had the queerest fancies acent the gullibility of their readers. Some verses on the Slave-trade, and a small collection called *The Rustic Lyre*, complete the sum of her literary labours. She died at Melksham, Wilts, in 1806, and her death gave rise to the following jeu d'esprit, not exactly in the very best taste:—

Anne Yearsley tasted the Castalian stream,
And skimmed its surface as she skimmed her cream;
But struck at last by fate's unerring blow,
All that remains of Anne is—'Milk below.'

A NEW FOOD AND A NEW DRINK.

ATTENTION, as all men know, has of late years been anxiously turned towards the discovery of a plant capable, in whole or in part, of forming a substitute for the precarious potato-crop. Many have been suggested. The tuberous oxalis, the arracacha, the lesser celandine, and many more, have from time to time been brought into notice; but each in turn, when weighed in the balance of practical agriculture, has been found wanting.

The star of hope to which the eye of hungry Europe is now directed is an Oriental yam, which the combined labours of the 'Allies' have suddenly brought forth from an inglorious obscurity of 6000 years. Like the East and West Indian yams already known, it belongs

to the genus *dioscorea*; but is very different from these in its specific characters. M. Decaisne's experiments lead to the conclusion that it would speedily become a plant of real agricultural importance in France; and Professor Lindley sees no reason—judging from its geographical distribution, and its affinity to our hedge-bryony, which it much resembles—why it should not suit our climate.

The plant has large perennial rhizomes or roots, the top-ends of which are as thick as the fist, and which taper downwards to the thickness of the finger, descending perpendicularly to the depth of a yard, if the soil is loose enough to allow them. The haulm is annual, as thick as a goose-quill, cylindrical, entwining from right to left, two yards in height, of a violet colour, with small whitish specks; and when not artificially supported, it trails on the ground, rooting freely at the joints. In China, this plant has long been in extensive cultivation, under the name of *Sain-In*; and M. Montigny, through whom it was introduced from Shang-hae to Paris, reports it to be highly productive, and consumed as largely by the Chinese as the potato is by Europeans.

As yet, the applicability of the plant to Britain has not been practically demonstrated; but the French horticulturists, who have been at much pains to inquire into its merits, have arrived at the following conclusions:—1. That in point of flavour and nutritive properties, it is equal to the potato, and, in the opinion of Professor Decaisne, superior. 2. That the yield is greater, whilst its freedom from disease renders the crop more certain. 3. That it will grow upon sandy, and what are usually considered barren soils; and thus affords an excellent means of turning waste-land to profit. 4. That it can be propagated with facility. 5. That it may remain in the ground several years without degenerating, but, on the contrary, it increases in size, weight, and nutriment, 'furnishing at all seasons of the year an aliment within the reach of every one.' 6. That when harvested, it may be preserved in cellars or sheds, without vegetating, for many months after the potato has become useless for food. 7. It requires a shorter time in cooking than the potato; ten minutes' boiling being sufficient.

M. Decaisne, in detailing his experiments, observes: 'If a new plant is to have a chance of becoming useful in rural economy, it must fulfil certain conditions, in the absence of which its cultivation cannot be profitable. Now, the Chinese yam satisfies every one of these conditions. It has been domesticated from time immemorial; it is perfectly hardy in the climate of France; its root is bulky, rich in nutritive matter, eatable when raw, easily cooked either by boiling or roasting, and then having no other taste than that of flour (feculé). It is as much a ready-made bread as the potato, and is better than the batatas or sweet potato.'

The system of cultivation recommended by Professor Lindley for Britain is the following:—namely—For propagation, the smallest roots are set apart, and pitted to keep them from frost. In the spring, they are taken out and planted in furrows, pretty near each other, in well-prepared ground. They soon sprout and form prostrate stems, which are made into cuttings as soon as they are six feet long. As soon as the cuttings are ready, a field is worked into ridges, along each of which is formed a small furrow, in which the pieces of the stem are laid down and covered with a little earth, the leaves being left bare. If rainy weather follows, the cuttings strike immediately; if dry, they must be watered until they do strike. In fifteen or twenty days, the roots begin to form, and at the same time lateral branches appear, which are carefully

removed from time to time, to facilitate the swelling of the roots. In general, one plant produces two or three tubers (rhizomes), which are of a coffee-colour externally, but consist internally of a white, opaline, very friable, slightly milky, cellular mass, filled with flour, which softens and dries in cooking till it acquires the taste and quality of a potato, 'for which it might be mistaken'—possibly in taste, certainly not in appearance.

So much for the new food; we turn now to the new drink. This it is proposed to produce in a circuitous way from a Chinese plant, known to botanists as the *Holcus saccharatus*, which was introduced into France a few years ago, and into England last year. Chemical analysis shews this plant as containing 18½ per cent. of saccharine matter, being a higher proportion than in the case of beet. The sugar is obtained from the juice in the same way as that of the sugar-cane; but it appears that sometimes as much as a third of the total amount of sugar in the juice is not crystallisable, so that under certain circumstances the saccharine matter of the plant cannot be rendered wholly available in the sugar-manufactory. In fact, it is expected that in the actual produce of marketable sugar, the holcus can compete with beet only in the 44th and lower degrees of latitude.

How, then, is this plant to be made available as a British crop? It appears that, while the saccharine juice produced in cold countries is incapable of profitable conversion into sugar, it is, on the other hand, precisely in the most favourable condition for the distiller. To the difficulty of crystallisation is attributed the facility with which the juice enters into fermentation, and the large amount of alcohol it affords compared with the quantity of sugar directly indicated by the saccharometer. M. Vilimorin, who has carefully examined the capabilities of this crop, believing that it would be most advantageously cultivated for its alcoholic products, obtained results indicating a slightly higher production of sugar than beet, which, from 40,147 pounds of roots, yields 19,27 pounds of sugar per acre. But the difference in alcohol is more important, beet yielding 120 gallons only, while holcus gives 182 gallons—a difference of 60 gallons on the acre; and it is as a drink-plant, therefore, and not as a food-plant, that the *Holcus saccharatus* must be accepted. Instead of standing up as a rival to beet, it will become a substitute, or rather a supplement, to the vine, which has of late years been so severely threatened with blight.

In France, the capabilities of the plant have been demonstrated. M. de Beauregard having fermented, by means of the refuse of grapes, a quantity of the juice of the holcus in his wine-vats, obtained an alcohol of excellent flavour, which he sent to the market at Marseille, where it realised the same price as the ordinary alcohol there exposed. Of all substitutes for the vine that have hitherto been tried, Dr Turrell believes the holcus to be the best, producing an alcohol altogether superior to every other.

But the holcus has nobler aspirations, and is likely to minister substantially to our intellectual wants. It responds to the cry for rags, by a yield of four tons an acre of material for paper-making, after the juice has been extracted. Nor is this all. A writer in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* says: 'Attention has been drawn to a novelty of the year, in the shape of a tall reedy grass, called *Holcus saccharatus*, of whose economical virtue I find that great expectations are raised. . . . The Deccan sportsmen and officers use it largely, under the name of *joware*, in preference to the coarse grass or hay obtainable there, in feeding their hunters and chargers, which thrive well upon it; so much so, indeed, that when sent to the coast for racing purposes, a supply of it invariably accompanies them.'

THE CLYDE IN NOVEMBER.

HARK! from the hills, where blustering herald-winds Blow their loud trumpet to the vales beneath, A voice proclaims sear Autumn in his tomb: With larger wave Clyde hurries foaming on, And, joined by many a tuneful brother-rill, Makes hoarse deep music o'er his harp of rocks— A dirge for the departed. Beech and lime Have cast their many-coloured vests of leaves, And in bare, cheerless desolation stand, Like broken-hearted mourners. Each small flower, That late so fondly oped her golden eye To greet her sovereign, sun, and breathed at eve Her incense-prayer to God, now shuts her lids, Drops all her beauty-petals on cold earth, And faints into decay. The shade of Grief, As 'twere the ghost of Summer, walks the vale, Leans from the mist-wrapped Lowthers, throne of storms, Or listens the deep roar of Corra Linn. The gusty cloud hangs black in heaven—a pall Spread for the corpse of Nature's late green beauty; And tears are falling through the chilly air, From sorrowing spirits sitting in the skies, Lamenting change so sad. The hermit-bittern, Haunting the plashy moor, is happy now; The eagle, too, that mounts, well-pleased, the storm, Sailing along the Grampians, shrieks afar, Shrieks an 'All-hail!' to Winter's hoary king.

NICHOLAS MICHELL.

JUGGLING EXTRAORDINARY.

One of the old men came forward upon the gravelled and hard-trodden avenue, leading with him a woman. He made her kneel down, tied her arms behind her, and blindfolded her eyes. Then bringing a great bag-net made with open meshes of rope, he put it over the woman, and laced up the mouth, fastening it with knotted intertwining cords in such a way that it seemed an impossibility for her to extricate herself from it. The man then took a closely woven wicker-basket, that narrowed towards the top, lifted the woman in the net from the ground, and placed her in it, though it was not without the exertion of some force that he could crowd her through the narrow mouth. Having succeeded in getting her into the basket, in which, from its small size, she was necessarily in a most cramped position, he put the cover upon it, and threw over it a wide strip of cloth, hiding it completely. In a moment, placing his hand under the cloth, he drew out the net quite untied and disentangled. He then took a long, straight, sharp sword, muttered some words to himself while he sprinkled the dust upon the cloth, and put some upon his forehead; then pulled off and threw aside the covering, and plunged the sword suddenly into the basket. Prepared as in some degree we were for this, and knowing that it was only a deception, it was yet impossible to see it without a cold creeping of horror. The quiet and energy with which he repeated his strokes, driving the sword through and through the basket, while the other jugglers looked on, apparently as much interested as ourselves, were very dramatic and effective. Stopping after he had riddled the basket, he again scattered dust upon its top, lifted the lid, took up the basket from the ground, shewed it to us empty, and threw it away. At the same moment, we saw the woman approaching us from a clump of trees at a distance of at least fifty or sixty feet. Throughout the whole of this inexplicable feat, the old man and the woman were quite removed from the rest of their party. The basket stood by itself on the hard earth, and so much beneath the veranda on which we were sitting, that we could easily see all around it. By what trick our watchful eyes were closed, or by what means the woman invisibly escaped, was an entire mystery, and remains unsolved.—*Crayon* (U. S.)

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